

# ILRI East and Southeast Asia newsletter

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## ILRI celebrates 14 years of partnership in agricultural research for development in Vietnam

This year (2020) marks 14 years of livestock research for development work by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Vietnam. On 2 October, ILRI organized a meeting in Hanoi to celebrate this milestone. About 30 partners gathered at an event to celebrate the partnership between ILRI and partners over the past 14 years.

In an opening speech presented virtually from ILRI in Nairobi, director general, Jimmy Smith, said the occasion was an 'opportunity to put into perspective the achievements of ILRI and its partners in Vietnam and to plan for the future to ensure stronger and even more fruitful partnerships between the institute and partners in the country.'

ILRI started its work in Vietnam in 2006. In those early days, it was hosted in the compound of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and had one staff member. ILRI gradually grew its research portfolio and expanded its partnerships. Today, Vietnam hosts ILRI's third biggest office—the regional office for East and Southeast Asia—after its Nairobi and Addis Ababa offices in Kenya and Ethiopia, respectively.

Over these 14 years, ILRI has been partnering with many of Vietnam's government agencies, research institutions, development organizations, CGIAR centres and private companies to achieve the mission of improving food and nutritional security and to reduce poverty in developing countries through research for efficient, safe and sustainable use of livestock—ensuring better lives through livestock.

Some key achievements of ILRI in Vietnam are in food safety, value chain development and One Health. From 2006 to 2020, ILRI implemented 43 projects in 22 provinces, with a budget of USD11 million and signed 10 memorandums of understanding with partners. In the last three years, more than 50,000 people have benefitted from ILRI's work in the country including through training of PhD, MSc and undergraduate students, and public health and other professionals with national university partners and institutes.

Dao The Anh, vice president of the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS), said that research by ILRI has contributed to the growth of the country's agriculture sector, especially in the field of food safety with the

introduction of risk-based management approaches. 'ILRI's research not only focuses on livestock production and veterinary services but is also very diverse and integrated,' he added.

ILRI is part of CGIAR, the largest partnership for international agriculture research in the world. Ten of 15 CGIAR's centres have offices and/or activities in Vietnam, employing 44 international staff and 80 local staff. At present, CGIAR is moving forward to a unified One CGIAR, which is a dynamic reformulation of CGIAR's partnership aiming for greater integration and impact in response to new challenges facing the world.

At the meeting, Smith announced that Hung Nguyen, the regional representative of ILRI Vietnam and East and Southeast Asia, would relocate to ILRI in Nairobi to co-lead the Animal and Human Health Program. Fred Unger would take over Hung's position from 1 October 2020.

Nguyen said, 'I had the pleasure to work for ILRI as regional representative for Vietnam and East and Southeast Asia since 2014. During this time, I enjoyed working with many of you and your respective institutions. Without these partnerships, ILRI would not have achieved these successes.' He added that Vietnam is a good country for ILRI and international partners to collaborate with in agricultural research for development.'

Unger said he was confident that ILRI and partners in the country would continue working together to address, among other challenges, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the transition to One CGIAR, alongside changes in the donor landscape and priorities. 'I am confident that we will together turn some of them into opportunities for the future.'

Smith thanked the partners in Vietnam for working with ILRI. He emphasized ILRI's commitment to helping the country address its strategically important livestock issues and continuing the close cooperation with the government, agencies and companies there.



### Welcome to the eighth edition of ILRI East and Southeast Asia newsletter!

We share a newsletter with you every six months to give you, our stakeholders, donors and partners timely updates on ILRI's ongoing research activities, news and events in the region.

I hope you will enjoy reading it and thank you for supporting ILRI East and Southeast Asia.

Learn more about our work at [www.asia.ilri.org](http://www.asia.ilri.org). If you have any feedback please contact [ilri-vietnam@cgiar.org](mailto:ilri-vietnam@cgiar.org).

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**Fred Unger**  
ILRI regional representative  
for east and southeast Asia

## Institutional news

### New chicken genetic project to improve smallholder poultry system in Southeast Asia

September 2020 marks the approval by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) of the Asian Chicken Genetic Gains (AsCGG) project, which will be implemented in Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam. This new four-year partnership between ILRI and national agricultural research institutes in the aforementioned countries aims to contribute to improved smallholder poultry systems through adapting new and proven genetic technologies and approaches that increase farmer access to locally acceptable and adapted—yet highly productive—birds. The project will contribute to the development priorities of these countries, which aim at enhanced the productivity of smallholder poultry farming. It also provides a platform for South-South learning through the African Chicken Genetic Gains (ACGG) program, which is implemented since 2014 in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania. In addition to government research departments, the project envisages working with a number of nongovernmental organizations and private poultry genetics companies to help develop a roadmap for a longer-term chicken genetic gains programs in each country. Launching of activities is planned for the second quarter of 2021.

### Vietnamese One Health partners commit to strengthening their collaboration during visit to research site

In November 2018, the Hanoi University of Public Health (HUPH), the Vietnam One Health University Network (VOHUN), the Thai Nguyen Sub-Department of Animal Health, Production and Fishery (Sub-DAH), the Thai Nguyen Center for Diseases Control (CDC), the Thai Nguyen University of Medicine and Pharmacy (TUMP), the Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF) and ILRI signed an agreement to form a new One Health research partnership. Under the partnership, these organizations have been collaborating in One Health research at a provincial-level One Health research site in Thai Nguyen Province in the Tonkin Delta.

On 2 July 2020, human and animal health experts from the partnership met to review the progress and achievements of the One Health research work at the field site. They discussed ways of enhancing research at the site and how ILRI and VOHUN can assist the Thai Nguyen One Health partners in developing communication products to better disseminate their project outputs and outcomes and to promote One Health in the province. One potential collaboration that was discussed with the Thai Nguyen partners was testing probiotic use in pig production to reduce the use of antibiotics in pig fattening under the 'Market-based approach to improving the safety of pork in Vietnam', or SafePORK project, which is funded by ACIAR.

## Project events

### Reviewing policies for livestock production in Hanoi

A team of human health and animal health scientists from different institutions and universities in Vietnam and Sweden published a paper on 'Livestock development in Hanoi, Vietnam—challenges and policies'. The paper reviews the existing policies for livestock production in the city of Hanoi and the changes in livestock population between 2014 and 2018 and defines major challenges for livestock development of the city. While a remarkable increase of the livestock population in recent years is evident, the dominance of small-scale farms, the presence of animal diseases, the slow progress of transiting farms out of urban areas, as well as the lack of analysis of climate change and gender impacts are major challenges that could affect livestock development in Hanoi.

### Community engagement to transform livestock systems in Northwest Vietnam

In September 2020, the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock research team presented to the communes of Chieng Chung and Chieng Luong the planned interventions and five areas of focus of the 'Livestock-led interventions towards equitable livelihoods and improved environment in the Northwest of Vietnam' project (or Li-chan meaning 'beautiful' or 'true' in the local Thai dialect). The project's objectives, methods and proposed activities were also discussed with the participants, who were encouraged to share their feedback and views on the planned interventions and to reflect on how these aligned with their own priorities. Researchers and participants jointly agreed on a schedule of project capacity development activities, which will start in October 2020 and run until September 2021.



Thai women attend the Li-chan project consultation workshop (photo credit: ILRI/Chi Nguyen)

### BMZ-funded project to share recommendations for enhancing pork safety in rural Vietnam

In November, 30 animal and human health experts gathered in Hoa Binh Province, in northwest Vietnam, to discuss ways of disseminating the findings and recommendations of the now concluded two-year 'Safer



indigenous pork and healthier ethnic minorities in Vietnam through better management of parasitic pig-borne diseases' project.

A 2018 study by the project found that trichinellosis and cysticercosis only occur sporadically in Hoa Binh Province and the health risks posed by these diseases to humans were relatively low. The project team recommended improved pork production and changes in pork consumption practices to further reduce the risk of cysticercosis and trichinellosis. The project raised awareness among farmers and local consumers on the nature and risks of food-borne zoonotic pathogens to better prevent and control diseases in pigs. The project team also used targeted behaviour change communication materials with messages that promoted handwashing with soap when handling, and before eating, pork and educated farmers and households members on how to cook pork properly before eating it to prevent the spread of parasites. Awareness was also raised on the importance of regular mass deworming for community members.



*While Ban pig is a main source of livelihood of ethnic people in Hoa Binh Province, they pose risks to human health if certain risky practices such as the raising of pigs in free-range systems and the consumption of raw or undercooked pork continue (photo credit: ILRI/Chi Nguyen).*

## Exploring the use of participatory epidemiology in controlling antibiotic resistance

As part of celebrating the World Antibiotic Awareness Week (18–24 November), which is commemorated each November to raise awareness of antibiotic resistance (AMR), we highlighted a section from the 'Participatory epidemiology: principles, practice, utility, and lessons learnt' paper that was published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* on applying participatory epidemiology in controlling AMR in Vietnam.

The research in Vietnam was done collaboratively by researchers from University of Queensland, ILRI, Hanoi University of Public Health and Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry. The initiative introduced in this paper used participatory approaches to engage a variety of livestock production stakeholders in Thai Nguyen to explore and identify leverage points for the improved use of antimicrobials in veterinary healthcare. According to the authors, the use of a participatory approach ensured that the views of farmers and community stakeholders remained

central to the pursuit of reducing AMR. They concluded that 'through maintaining farmers as central stakeholders in the research and including other groups the farmers identified as important, this participatory process highlighted opportunities to improve antimicrobial stewardship that were agreeable to all.'



*Multi-stakeholder workshop to finalize list of interventions in September 2018 (photo credit: Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry).*

## Australia-funded safe pork project in Vietnam reviews 2020 achievements and sets goals for 2021

On 27–28 November 2020, the SafePORK project team and partners held an annual planning meeting in Ninh Binh Province, Vietnam. The two-day workshop reviewed the accomplishments of the project in 2020 and set project goals for 2021 and beyond. While the project faces an overall delay of 6–9 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project achieved several milestones in 2020, its third year of work. In 2020, SafePORK's interventions were implemented and scaled up in a medium-scale slaughterhouse and two traditional markets in Tien Lu District, Hung Yen Province. This work relied on the use of participatory approaches, which the project promotes to improve pork safety in the country. All team members agreed that low-cost food safety interventions at key points of the pork value chain and risk communication will be continued in 2021. Also, food safety interventions that have received policy-level support, for example, the intervention package at slaughterhouses, will be further consolidated and scaled up in collaboration with the private sector.



*A pork retailer in Tien Lu District, Hung Yen Province, who is involved in the SafePORK project (photo credit: ILRI/Chi Nguyen).*

# Capacity development

## Training on animal health and genetics for farmers in Northwest Vietnam

In October and November 2020, the Li-chan project trained 217 livestock farmers and 20 local vets in six villages of Chieng Luong and Chieng Chung communes in Mai Son District, Son La Province. Farmers learned about common diseases in animals, how to use vaccines and antibiotics with the correct dosage and handling animal epidemic outbreaks.

The project has also trained 125 cattle and pig farmers on different breeds of cattle and pigs. In particular, a two-day training course on semen extraction was held for 10 trainees who include animal semen providers and local vets in two communes. The project has also organized a training course for 36 trainees who are local vets and farmers. Up to now, the project has conducted artificial insemination for 27 cows and 21 Ban pigs. The trainers are senior researchers from the National Institute of Animal Science and National Institute of Veterinary Research.



Ethnic women in Chieng Luong commune attend a training on genetics by Li-chan project (photo credit: ILRI/Tu Mai).

## Recent publications

Following are some recent publications by the ILRI East and Southeast Asia team. To see the full list,



The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) works to improve food and nutritional security and reduce poverty in developing countries through research for efficient, safe and sustainable use of livestock. Co-hosted by Kenya and Ethiopia, it has regional or country offices and projects in East, South and Southeast Asia as well as Central, East, Southern and West Africa. [ilri.org](http://ilri.org)



CGIAR is a global agricultural research partnership for a food-secure future. Its research is carried out by 15 research centres in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations. [cgiar.org](http://cgiar.org)

ILRI thanks all donors that globally support its work through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund.

Patron: Professor Peter C Doherty AC, FAA, FRS

Animal scientist, Nobel Prize Laureate for Physiology or Medicine—1996

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- **Hu Suk Lee**, Thakur, K.K., Vuong Nghia Bui, **Thanh Long Pham**, Anh Ngoc Bui, Tung Duy Dao, Vu Thi Thanh and **Wieland, B.** 2020. A stochastic simulation model of African swine fever transmission in domestic pig farms in the Red River Delta region in Vietnam. *Transboundary and Emerging Diseases*.
- **Long Pham-Thanh**, Magnusson, U., Minh Can-Xuan, **Hung Nguyen-Viet**, Lundkvist, A. And **Lindahl, J.** 2020. Livestock development in Hanoi city, Vietnam—Challenges and policies. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* 7: 566.
- Phuc Pham-Duc, **Hung Nguyen-Viet**, Toan Luu-Quoc, Cook, M.A., Phuong Trinh-Thi-Minh, Payne, D., Trang Dao-Thu, **Grace, D.** and **Sinh Dang-Xuan.** 2020. Understanding antibiotic residues and pathogens flow in wastewater from smallholder pig farms to agriculture field in Ha Nam Province, Vietnam. *Environmental Health Insights* 14.

## Staff updates

- ILRI Vietnam welcomed **Loan Pham** who joined as gender specialist;
- **Fred Unger** was promoted to ILRI regional representative for East and Southeast Asia
- We said goodbye to **Hung Nguyen** who relocated to ILRI Kenya to as co-leader of the Animal and Human Health Program.

## Upcoming events

- Safe Food, Fair Food for Cambodia project closing workshop (tbc, depending on COVID-19 situation in Cambodia)
- National dialogue: Towards Global Food Systems Summit—Developing inclusive and sustainable food systems for SDGs by 2030 (May 2021)
- Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development-CGIAR coordination workshop (September 2021)
- Li-chan closing workshop (September 2021)

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